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Is Telemedicine filling the gap between the Tier 2 or tier 3 cities

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Ayush Atul Mishra, Co-Founder and CEO of Tattvan shares his views on how telemedicine is filling the gap between the Tier 2 or tier 3 cities



Doctor – patient ratio in India is 1:11082!

This does not even meet the prescribed standard of the World Health Organisation i.e. 1:1000 doctor-patients. It is scary but a known fact.

In rural areas, the condition is even worse. 70 percent of the Indian population dwells in rural areas where the number of doctors is only a fourth of those in urban areas. Knowing the truth that accesses to quality healthcare services is the fundamental requirement of living beings, such stats are enough to give us chills in the spine.

Telemedicine is a product of tech advancements that aims to fill the void of demand and supply in the healthcare sector. Telemedicine connects patients with expert medical practitioners via real-time two-way communication over video calls where patients can remotely consult the best doctors irrespective of time and geographical restriction.

A country like India with a severe dearth of specialized doctors in remote areas, stepping out of the conventional healthcare system is non-negotiable. In this case, telemedicine can act as a lifeline.

A decade ago, accident victims and patients in rural areas had no or limited access to reliable medical facilities. They had no choice other than rushing to the capital or other metropolitan cities to get good treatment. This, in turn, increases their liabilities as they have to pay additionally for accommodation and travel. Above all, time was the prime factor as many lives were lost due to the long distance between hospital and patient. But telemedicine has turned out to be miraculous for the rural population.

How Telemedicine has fostered a good provider-patient relationship in tier 2 and tier 3 cities

In-person encounters offer the opportunity to medical care providers to create a therapeutic relationship with their patients. Face-to-dace interactions also enhance patient satisfaction scores and make them feel more confident about the treatment and outcomes. Though, critics doubt that telemedicine may lead to patient relationship suffering. However, video technology like video calling or video conferencing significantly helped to overcome this challenge. Also, telemedicine enables medical service providers to examine the facial expressions of patients to analyze nonverbal behaviors during a video encounter.

Many times, the distance factor also enhances an encounter, especially in behavioral health when patients usually feel more relaxed within the comfort of their home environment than in a sterile office environment.

Adding to the convenience of patients, telemedicine delivers a positive experience of speedy access, timesaving, precision, and the power to contact and consult with healthcare providers without any time or geographic restriction. Undoubtedly, rural people have been benefitted from these real-time virtual visits in terms of follow-up consultations as they can do that while sitting in their home or neighborhood.

Parallelly, telemedicine has decreased healthcare cost in many ways:

- Optimized medical resources and staff distribution within a healthcare service and throughout the system.
- Empowered primary care suppliers to conduct appointments without requiring additional office staff. It provides extending medical assistance as virtual medical providers are not restricted to time.
- Decreased the financial effect of patient no-shows
- Enhanced patient engagement
- Restricted unnecessary hospital visits and admissions

Telemedicine has great potential to alter the future picture of medicine in rural as well as urban settings by enhancing access to high-quality healthcare affordably. Demand for this tech-savvy medical assistance is multiplying already and is sure to accelerate in the future as well. This is because telemedicine has revolutionized the entire scenario of the medical industry and has brought patients from remote areas in contact with good medical practitioners.